

OPINION

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"A WAY TO DIE, LIVING TO THE END"

(Rosemary and Victor Zorza, Andre' Deutsch £ 5.95 PP 250)

(Continued from 11th November 1980)

TAYA ZINKIN

"If there are several deaths in one week, that makes you very sad. But it also means that several people have gone out of this life without the anguish, without the torment that people usually expect, and you know that in some small way you have helped to bring this about. I am getting more, far more than I am giving. You can give more to a patient you love. People who know they are dying do not hold back usually. If they have talked to you freely about themselves, about their families, about their pain and happiness in the past, then you have made a friend, a real friend, and how many real friends does one normally make in a lifetime?" Mother Theresa herself could not have put it better.

Hospices are fairly new to the West and almost unknown in America. The Zorzas hope to promote their spread everywhere and hope, with the royalties of their book, to help to finance a Chair in Hospice Studies in conjunction with the British National Society for Cancer Relief in India there is already a plan to start a hospice, the Shanti Avedna Ashram under the guidance of Dr. L. J. deSouza of the Tata Memorial Hospital.

CARTER, REAGAN AND THE FUTURE

CARTER let down the Shah very badly. The American people let down Carter very badly. The Shah was on the whole a well-intentioned man, so was Carter. But good intentions are not enough. The way to hell is paved with them says the proverb. The way to failure certainly is. Implementation, implementation, implementation—that is the essence of both policy and real success. By real is meant worth-while, not only from the mundane but from the ethical point of view.

It may be that sometimes ill-luck prevents the well-intentioned from succeeding in truly significant matters. In the Shah's case, there was no such question; he allowed rampant corruption and wide-spread nepotism.

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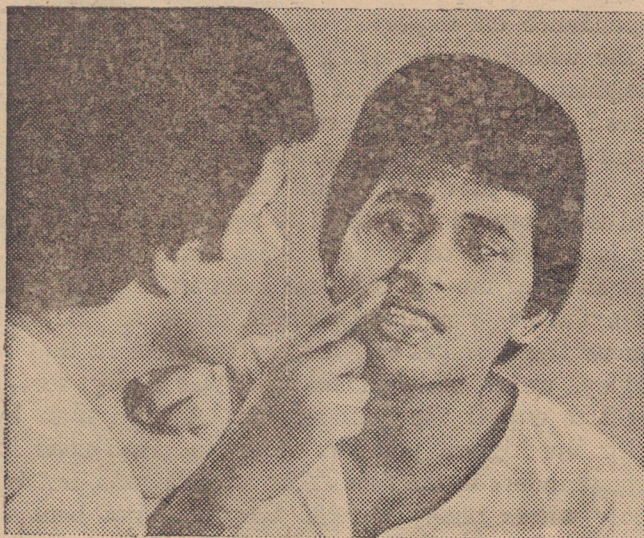
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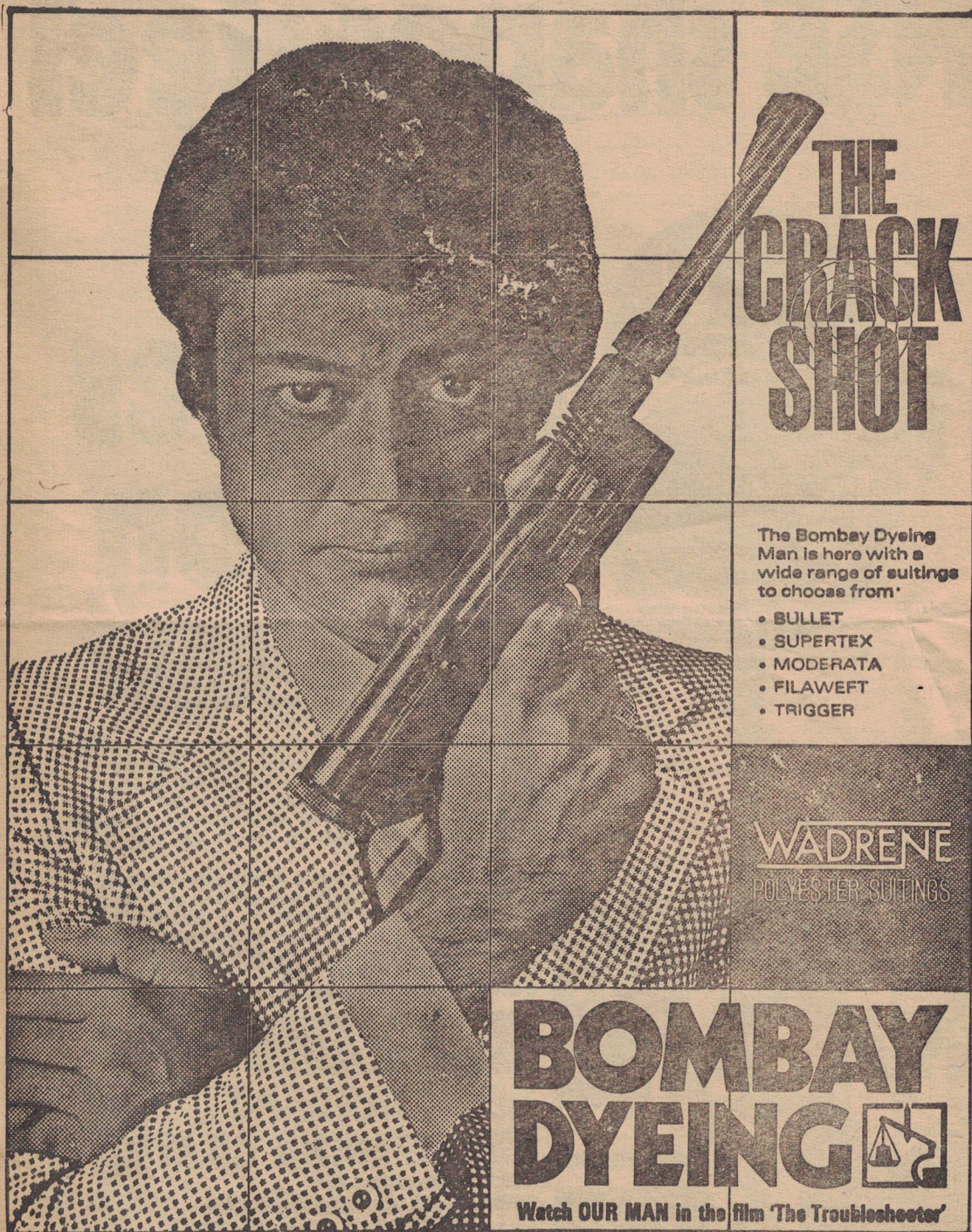
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He lost touch very largely with the common people, who he often said were the bulworks of his regime. In Carter's there was a substantial element of ill-luck. Take, for instance, his energy proposals, sound, wellconsidered, eminently practicable, quite likely if implemented to end American dependence on imported oil, and so help not only his own country, but the whole oil importing community. But could he get it through the legislature, though there were majorities of his own party in both its houses? No, various interests proved too strong, and at the end of his term the policy remained for the most unimplemented. It might be said, But it is part of a President's business to be able to manage the Senate and the House, to get them to agree to his essential proposals, and that if he is unable to do it, he is inefficient. Well then Carter was inefficient, but so have most Presidents been in regard to some matter or other. No, Carter was plainly unfortunate, as the failure of the attempt to rescue the hostages showed, unfortunate in that his best-laid plans went agley, unfortunate in that he was badly served when he had every right to expect the best service. A good man but unlucky, and so unfit for the highest position. As Napoleon used to ask when choosing his commanders in the field, 'Ah yes, he's good, but is he lucky?', and reject those whose record showed they had not been favoured by fortune, so the American people have turned down Carter. May he have a long and satisfactory retirement, for he is on the whole a really good man.

To have chosen instead Reagan, the colourful hero of many a film and of a couple of terms as governor of an important state, known for his extreme views on many important matters, views which if acted upon when in power might lead to the most serious consequences, was it wise? The American majority would answer, "Wise or unwise, we had no choice. Carter had failed, Reagan was unlikely in practise to do worse; he might do better, he probably would, we could but try him. As for Anderson, the third candidate, if he could have gathered much more support in the earlier stages, we might have swung behind him. But it was clear from the beginning, he was a loner. So although his programme might have been more appealing and he a safer person than Reagan, why throw one's vote away on him?"

Reagan when in power, most feel, is not likely to live up to the full extent of his views. He knows like everyone else that a nuclear war must be avoided if civilisation is to survive and will take care to avoid it, even while pressing the Soviet power much more closely than Carter did. In troubles between non-nuclear powers he will help to the disadvantage of the Communists, but that is as far as he will go. He may even get the Americans to accept that blood is the price of world leadership, and that on the right occasion, some may have to die in order that all shall remain free, but it is very unlikely that he will be tripper—happy or rash.

In domestic affairs, a change in policy is certainly likely; for the better or the worse will depend on the predelictions of the citizen and



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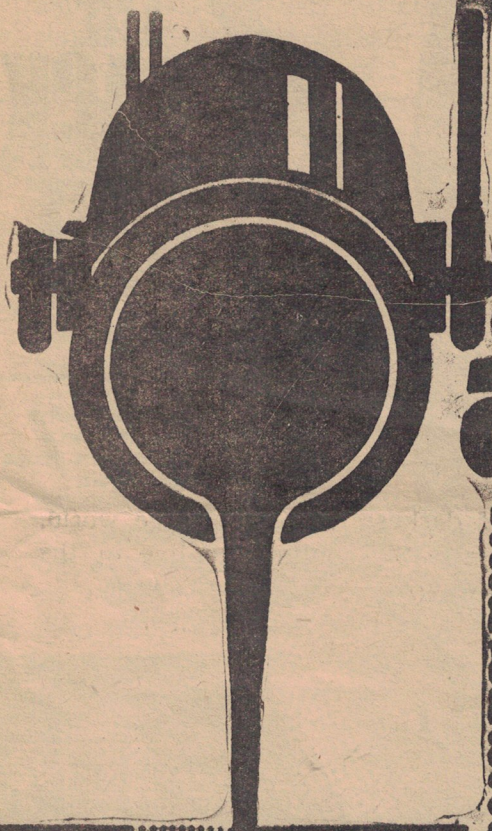
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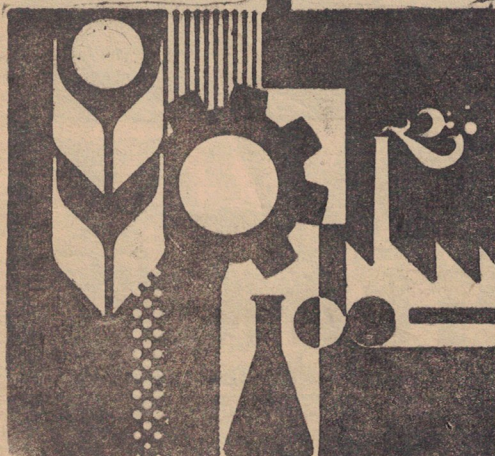
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the viewer, but if it succeeds in holding and reducing inflation over a period of three years, it will certainly have considerable justification. We on the outside can only wait and watch, with an occasional prayer that wisdom may inform the Reagan government, in the interest of the world as a whole and of democracy in particular.

India may have good reason to be specially wary in the early years of the new administration. Among those high-up in it or its advisors are likely to be Kissinger and Nixon, neither of whom can be regarded as a friend. Has anyone forgotten their 'tilt' towards Pakistan, their sending of the fleet to the Bay of Bengal during the last Indo-Pakistan war? Since then moreover Indo-Soviet ties have unfortunately become closer. Our Indiraji has even found excuses for the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In the circumstances it would not be surprising to find the Reagan administration seizing with glee, any opportunity to cut India down to size. If they are wise, they will avoid the temptation, for real American interests can scarcely be served better than by our continuance as a real democracy in the midst of the surrounding ocean of autocratic despotisms. If however they neglect this, and wishing to hurt India, indirectly strengthen Mrs. Gandhi's hands to make India her despotic fief—that will be the effect few knowledgable will doubt—they will damage themselves quite as much as India, and will strengthen the Soviet Union and all other enemies of freedom. Whatever their immediate purpose and the gain they contemplate in the short-term, they will have added to the spread of darkness throughout the world, and made it more difficult for themselves to continue to live in the light of freedom.

COMMENT

OMLETTES must be made, but eggs must not be broken, nor onions and chilis cut nor frying-fat used. This is what Mrs. Gandhi is saying in her pronouncement on Assam at the National Integration Council. Settle Assam she says but hurt no one, not the foreigners from any date nor the Assamese. In other words, she means leave things as they are. But as they hurt the Assamese badly; that is why the whole agitation and the year of struggle and discussion, and you can't just brush it under the carpet with a few pious platitudes. The foreigners will have to be hurt; those from 1971 onwards with deportation; those from '51 or '61 onwards whichever date may be decided on, by loss of electoral rights. So make up your mind, great lady. Will you settle or will you fight compromise reasonably or set out to reconquer Assam? In present circumstances, these are the only choices, and if you think by waiting and waiting, you are likely to alter these circumstances, you may find yourselves sadly mistaken.

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